

[Interview with Vito Cacciola #26]

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INTERVIEW

with

VITO CACCIOLA

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by

Merton R. Lovett

. . . .

“As well as remembered...”

. . . .

INTERVIEW WITH VITO CACCIOLA

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. . .

(from memory)

“Good morning Mr. Lovett. You catcha me cooka de dinner. How does your wife fixa mash-ed potatoes?

“How mucha milk does she use? I puta in de butter too. It maka it more delicious.

“Don't leava. You does not disturba me. Sitta down here.

“If you cannot eat; I pray you have de cup of coffee.

“I will finda now my silver. Here it is. I buya it long time ago at Kransberg's. Is it not nica? That is one Jew who is gooda man. If all was like him, there would be no repersentment and enmity. Much I deplora de unfairness with which de Germans treata de Jews. Everywhere is lack of tolerance. Jesus did not teacha that.

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"Never did I usa de new silver before. I saya myself; sometime de respected company will coma. I cannot leta you use de aluminum spoon, Mr. Lovett.

"First I taka de tissue paper off. Then I wipe a them on dis towel. It is de towel I cleana dishes on. This towel I wipea de hands. This one I use when I maka bathe.

"Does you think it a peculiarity that I saya prayer before eating? Always I thanka de good Lord. Does you lika sugar in de coffee?

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"Peter will be arrived next week. He will bringa his wife and de family. See I hava de letter from my niece. Does she not writa more good for girl de twelve years of age?

"You may reada it. It holds nothing of secrets.

"You is righta. Angela maka fine grammar. I is mucha proud. She can writa in Italian just so well also.

"She lova me more better than her mother or father or godmother.

"Oh! thata word is 'Zizi.' It is what she calla me sometimes. It is a word produc-ed from de Italian. And did you seea all de little crosses. They means kisses for her Uncle Vito. I have much joy and fortunateness.

"Where is you manners Tony? Did you not see de guest? Taka off your cap.

"Did you brings de shoes with crepe soles? Good. What! You wanta go home to study? O.K. But you be careful Tony and not maka de school work in de street. Don't leta me catch you study on de skates.

"Sita still. I coma back quick. It is another customer.

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"Much our intercourse is disrupt-ed. Soma time there is no peoples come. Soma time they coma in bunches. I praya you have coffee, de nother cup.

"De boy what just bringa shoes to mend was son of Charles Lugio. Does you knowa him? Hes de sparkling boy; very smarta.

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Sometime hes talka too smart. He maka de profanity. One day I heara him say de sinful words. I saya to him; "Johny why does you maka de talk so bad? Does not de Sister teacha you it is naughty to swear.

"Johny answer-ed; ' Yes de Sister tella me that. She teacha me besides all de prayers. ' &" ' That is gooda Johny, ' I replies. ' I am a glad you know it is sinful to swear. I am a glad you saya your prayers. I wanta you to promise me something. Promise me you will never again say de bad words. '

" ' All righta ' , he say; ' I promisea you Vito. I will swear no more, ever again. '

"But by gracious! What you thinka? I see him de same day. He was spinning de top lika this. It goes rounda and round quick. Then some boy, to maka mischief, graba it and run. Then Johny he gets a angry. He swears mucha. He saya many words of sin.

"Yes. You is right. I thinka besides that most peoples knowa what is good and what is bad. Why then does they conducta themselves with evil. The churches teacha de truth. Why then is there so mucha crime?

"Did you reada in paper that some boy killed de school-teacher in Maine? Do you know does they catcha him yet? I thinka 4 he was once iustruct-ed in de righteous life. But he did not a remember de good teachings. This would be a mucha happy world if peoples did not forgeta what de priest and de minister tella them.

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"So you was de fine player at tennis? That is nica game. Does you maka games now?

"No! I do not thinka you is too old. You looka strong and rugg-ed.

"Hah! hah! I getta what you call de Charley horse too. That musta be horse of other color, I think.

"I am not de athletic inclin-ed. My pleasure is in de mind and heart. I traina my head.

"So you wants to know how I coma by Charley horse? That is strange name for horse. Why did many baseballers get him?

"You is joking, Mr. Lovett. Never did I puta money on de nose of a horse, and if I should, he would not be horse nam-ed Charley. That horse is too mucha painful.

"O.K. It was a this way. One time Mr. Fleming asked me to bowla. Does you know Mr. Fleming? He sella insurance.

"He taka me some place. They is many; what do you call them? Yes, allies, but they is very mucha unlike de alley in back of de store.

"There, there is many peoples. They casta de balls on de allies. They wisha to breaka some pieca wood thisa size. Thats a right-pins.

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"Did I getta de strike? Whats a that? No I dida not getta de strike. Perhaps Mr. Fleming getta it. He tossa de balls with much force and exactness. He maka de sticks—pins jumpa and falla down with great noise.

"I tossa a ball and would you believe me it; that ball bumpa in de nexta street.

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"Bye and bye I maka more skill. I maka many pins falla down. Mr. Fleming giva me good destructions. He tella me do this. He tella me do that.

"No I is most unlucky. I [wisheed?] to cast de ball with mucha fastness. I stoopa and make de swing with greatest vigor.

"Whata happen-ed? That I do not know. I slipa and dropa to de floor. A biga pain strika me here. It hurta like everything. I could not keepa from groan. By jingo I suspect-ed someone hita me with ball.

"Mr. Flemming he helped me to geta up. He is very mucha sympathiz-ed, he tella me he is sorrowful.

"Yes I bowl-ed some more, eacha time I tossed de ball it pain-ed me much. But I have mucha courage Mr. Lovett.

"What happen-ed to that ball when I getta de Charley horse. Did I maka a spare?

"Oh, Mr. Lovett! Did I geta de spare?

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Nobody tells me where de ball goes. By Jingo I does not care. Nor do I knowa de spare. But if you is de good friend of mine you will spara me more talk. I never bowla again. Now I maka only exercise in de shop and on de guitar. I never meeta no Charley horse when I play de guitar."